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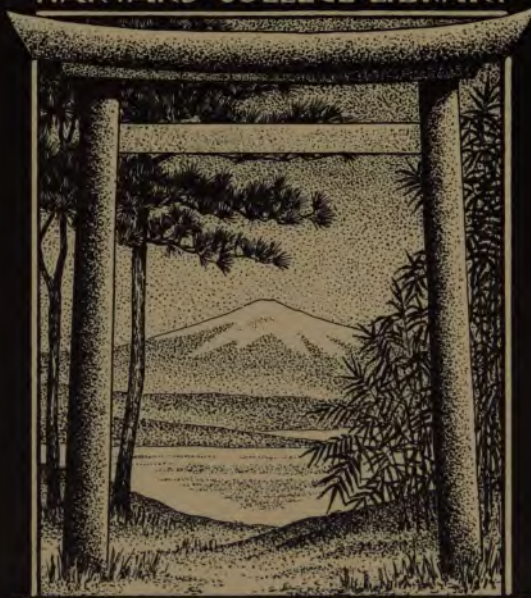

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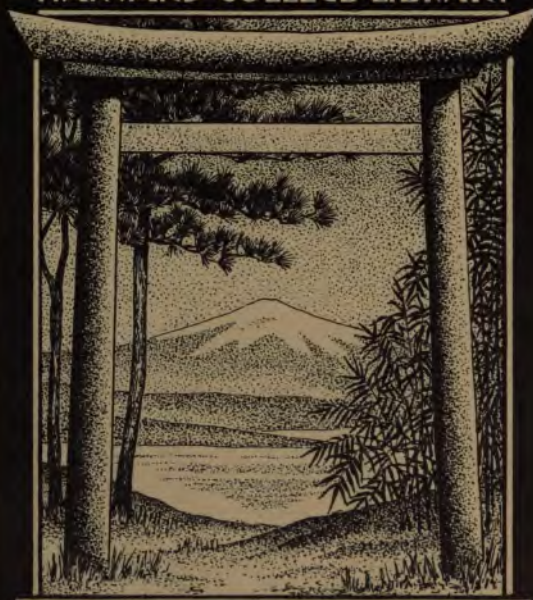

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WEE ONES OF JAPAN
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NEW YORK
HARPER & BROTHERS
MDCCCXCIV

WEE ONES OF JAPAN
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ILLUSTRATIONS BY
E. D. Nelson
NEW YORK
HARPER & BROTHERS
MDCCCXCIV

Sp. 13.6.1.16

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TO

THE WEE ONES OF AMERICA

THIS VOLUME

Is Affectionately Dedicated

BY

THE AUTHOR

ILLUSTRATIONS

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NOTE

In the following pages I have omitted all mention of the "made over" Japanese child and the institutions that have reconstructed him. I have ignored his European knee-breeches (that, in amusing contradiction of their name, usually caress his ankles). I have overlooked the would-be part in his hair that has cost him many a sore sinew. I have neglected to mention his scarlet stockings, his squeaking shoes, and his heavy armful of English school-books. And why? For the same reason that we turn our backs upon the unwelcome ray of a garish sun that penetrates into some delightful shadowy recess and hurts the eye.

I

THE two years of observation and study that we, two zealots, have devoted to the Wee Ones of Japan bring us to the conclusion that they deserve a few chapters all to themselves, and they shall have their deserts in the first American ones — we speak from our own bibliographical knowledge — ever given to the subject. These illustrations and pen-devotions are all for them; they are prayer-papers committed, we hope, to favorable winds.

After weeks and months of almost constant study of them, I —that is, the scribe of the zeal-

ots now speaking—can but regard these youngsters of Nippon as the most amusingly uncommon children in the world, so far as I know it. Also do I regard them —with apologies to my little American friends—as the very best-disciplined darlings to be found upon the ample bosom of Mother Earth.

Among their many attractions, I hold the first and chief to be the Circean charm of bodily comeliness. The exceptional beauty of these creamy sprites is the subject of daily comment among fleeting tourists and resident foreigners in Japan. I have heard the most indifferent travellers—cajoled perhaps by a sudden solitary dimple, or maybe by a swift and marvellous undulation that quicker than the quiver of an eyelid carries the winsome dimpler *à perte du vue*—declare that the *enfant Japonais* is, beyond all gainsaying, incredibly witching of face and graceful of form.

It is true, as is frequently objected, that the skin of the diminutive Nipponite is hardly as fine and never so fair as that of

our own housed-up pink-and-white babies. Equally true is it that the hair of the *café au lait* elves is black and uncompromisingly straight. The constant sight of this black hair sometimes sets one sighing for the rings of twisted sunbeams composing so many American tresses. Still, the young Jap possesses charms as potent. There is the healthful, glowing, crocus tint diffused over a low, well-moulded brow, over a tiny nose, often impertinently *retroussé*, and over a dimple-cleft chin. Add to these, round ripe cheeks that retain far into the teens the crimson gloss of the lusty fall pippin, and you have touches from Nature's "make-up" box not altogether to be despised, as complexions go amongst us.

The locks of which I have spoken look as if some artist in nocturnes had given them daily and extravagant coats of raven shoe-polish; and besides, on the elliptical pates of the fanciful little maidens they are plastered and elaborated into an endless medley of twists, turns, ropes, and rolls. But all this is, if nothing else, a relief from the dead

monotony of color. And then the beautiful rows of strong, white, well-cared-for teeth in every small spherical mouth! "Scarlet tulips," an English punster has dubbed the ruddy borders of the pretty half-moon mouth; and betwixt the petals, like a weaver's ivory shuttle seen through a ruby woof, the glint and flash of pearl are such as would rescue even a distorted visage from the doom of homeliness. Moreover, as the Wee Ones of Japan are the jolliest elfins born—laughing from crown to toe through the golden hours of the daylight, and even into the gloaming—opportunities are constant for seeing the faultless teeth, which are, I may add, according to the experience and researches of an American dentist practising in Japan, for color, for strength of enamel, and for perfection in setting, unequalled in the world.

These fascinations are chiefly the work of Nature, with perfect digestion for her agent. But to Nature's cunning is added another which the Mother of the Centuries smiles on: the charming outlines and curves and

roundings of our plump little hopeful are, if possible, even more agreeable to us by our certain knowledge of its body's cleanliness. No matter of how indigent a household it forms a part, one may be sure that, as far as water—dangerously near 212° Fahrenheit—can avail, the glossy bambino is spruce and kissable. Japanese parents are by no means selfishly content with their own marvellously regular semi-daily ablutions. The water used in them must all but boil before it is credited with cleansing properties. The family bathings we read and hear so much about may be seen any mild afternoon in actual progress under the wide-open, tilted-roof, toylike sheds in the fanciful gardens — sheds that shut out absolutely no eye save that of the hotly inquisitive sun. And here, at least twice in twenty-four hours, the careful father and mother dip the little ones in the bath quite to the tips of their pink ears. This is done on days and occasions that are of no moment. But, be assured, if the flimsiest excuse presents itself, as, for example, that the day is an auspicious one of any kind — if

merely as far as the donning of new gowns is concerned—that excuse is invested with an enthusiasm really aroused, it would seem, for the purpose of plunging the youngster a third, and not infrequently a fourth time in the tub!

The Japanese baby—if I may be permitted to employ the seeming paradox—I will placard as the most ludicrously polite individuality I have ever had the diverting chance to behold. It is a sore fret within the American maternal bosoms — and in Japan they are many and worthy—that the children of Nippon's upper classes are disciplined to a point bordering on cruelty. But I consider this irritation to be needless. It is difficult for me, remembering the tenderness of childhood, to believe but that if these pliant, lithesome, dandiprat, golden-rod backs were really burdened, they would bend. And nothing of the bending nature is anywhere discernible in the Land of the Rising Sun. Quite the contrary. All who have given disinterested thought to these beams of babydom must grant me, *sans argument*, their vitality,

their blithesomeness, and their joyous spontaneity.

The disinterested observers to whom I have just appealed must concede me something more. These Japanese nestlings tickle our fancy and provoke our mirth. They are like their own country's world-renowned emblematic and prodigally tinted flowers of the amber fall. They come bursting and blooming into our lives with the freshness of that queen of the *Kiku* (chrysanthemums) known as the "Golden Dew." At their spring they bloom with the warmth of that russet fellow fitly termed the "Fisherman's Lantern." They bourgeon with the delicacy of that fretted compound of *tutti frutti* and frosted dew appropriately styled the "Starlit Gloaming;" or they greet us with the lazy waggery of the great tawny dishevelheaded prodigy called "Old Sleepyhead." On their first introduction they allure and arrest us with that low, deferential, comically serious prostration of their diminutive bodies which invariably accompanies the vivacious "Ohyo!" (Good-day!). They snare

and win us entirely by that even lower prostration which must, according to the Japanese code of etiquette, attend the slow, dulcet, Italian-sounding "Sayonara!" (Good-bye!). And then they coax us into good-natured laughter (received in the same spirit of courtesy) with extravagant sibilation or long indrawn hiss, which is the universal method of politely giving emphasis to an awed regard when they are personally addressed. And now I renew my appeal to the fair-minded observer, who will surely own that eventually the Wee Ones insinuate themselves, *viâ* some rosy undreamt-of route, into the affections. If departure from Japan should be contemplated for any length of time, the traveller who would remain "heart whole and fancy free" must take warning. He positively must not allow his mind to dwell upon the Wee Ones of that archipelago of witcheries.

I have already mentioned the good-fellowship that in the gladsome land of the Jap exists between sternest discipline and frolicsome joyousness — odd twins! But be an

Signora

eye-witness to the hand-in-hand intimacies of the people, and appreciate then what foils they are to one another—how fascinatingly incongruous they are — setting off (and delightfully) one another's best features.

To the outer view there seems to be no shadow, and as yet there is none. These children—and the sportive little maidens in particular—are as putty in the hands of the disciplinarian. Yet in the fond parent heart there is anxious thought for the future. A narrowed path of humbleness, resignation, and pitifully submissive obedience these little women must tread when, at painfully tender ages, they enter slavery. For there is an *affaire de famille* in which they have no voice; nor has religion any in it; it is a thraldom which handcuffs most of their natural desires, shackles their inclinations, and fetters their movements. It is called "wedlock." Why not "padlock"? From the firm compact that is welded about the bride by the *nakodo* (middleman), a trusted friend of her parents, she may never free herself on any provocation whatever. But her lord

may eject her from the matrimonial pale for a variety of small and a few great offences. The most common causes constitute the seven celebrated Confucian grounds for divorce. Through any of their seven avenues a man may pass out legally free of his fetters. These easy openings to liberty run, according to their importance and consequence, as follows:

1. The husband may obtain a divorce should his wife disobey her father-in-law, her mother-in-law, or himself.

2. If the wife fail to present him with offspring.

3. If the wife incline, ever so slightly, towards libidinousness.

4. If the wife be of a jealous disposition.

5. If the wife fall a victim to leprosy or any other incurable or obnoxious disease.

6. Should the husband find the wife too loquacious.

7. If the wife develop a propensity for thieving.

The ceremonious maze through which the ostentatious, self-sufficient groom and his

modest, fearful little bride enter the portal of the inequitable court of compacts, with their one-sided agreement—necessarily so, or it could not be Japanese—consists of countless puttings on and as many takings off of graceful *kimonos*, of the drinking together by bride and groom of nine dainty little lacquered cups of *saki*, and of the registrar of the *Ku's* transferring the bride's address from her old home to that of her father-in-law. Here, as Sir Edwin Arnold says, "she will henceforth become her lord's constant body-servant, and the humble attendant of his mother, who might make life a hell for her, and who simply seldom does, because Japanese natures are so much better than Japanese systems; and so for the most part the little brown people get on very well together."

Perhaps, however, the best and clearest idea of the superhuman sacrifice for which the innocent little petticoated darlings of Japan are trained from infancy can be gleaned from Mr. Basil Hall Chamberlain's explicit translation of the difficult *Onna*

Daigaku ("The Greater Learning for Women"), a treatise by the tried, trusted, and blindly followed moralist Kaibara. Which lines, be it remembered, with their demand for a sacrificial death and burial of female self, are not lightly taught, superficially learned, or easily forgotten, but spring readily to the lips of old and young, and are worn within the heart of the dutiful wife as a priceless jewel.

"THE GREATER LEARNING FOR WOMEN."

"Seeing that it is a girl's destiny on reaching womanhood to go to a new home and live in submission to her father-in-law and mother-in-law, it is even more incumbent upon her than it is on a boy to receive with all reverence her parents' instructions. Should her parents, through excess of tenderness, allow her to grow up self-willed, she will infallibly show herself capricious in her husband's house, and thus alienate his affection; while, if her father-in-law be a man of correct principles, the girl will find the yoke

of these principles intolerable, she will hate and decry her father-in-law, and the end of these domestic dissensions will be her dismissal from her husband's house, and the covering of herself with ignominy. Her parents, forgetting the faulty education they gave her, may, indeed, lay all the blame on the father-in-law. But they will be in error, for the whole disaster should rightly be attributed to the faulty education the girl received from her parents.

"More precious in a woman is a virtuous heart than a face of beauty. The vicious woman's heart is ever excited. She glares wildly around her; she vents her anger on others; her words are harsh, and her accent vulgar. When she speaks it is to set herself above others, to upbraid others, to envy others, to be puffed up with individual pride, to jeer at others, to outdo others — all things at variance with the way in which a woman should walk. The only qualities that befit a woman are gentle obedience, chastity, mercy, and quietness.

"From her earliest youth a girl should ob-

serve the line of demarcation separating women from men; and never, even for an instant, should she be allowed to hear or see the least impropriety. The customs of antiquity did not allow men and women to sit in the same apartment, to keep their wearing apparel in the same place, to bathe in the same place, or to transmit to each other anything from hand to hand. A woman going abroad at night must in all cases carry a lighted lamp, and (not to speak of strangers) she must observe a certain distance in her relations even with her husband and with her brethren. In our days the women of the lower classes, ignoring all rules of this nature, behave themselves disorderly; they contaminate their reputation, bring down reproach upon the heads of their parents and brethren, and spend their whole lives in an unprofitable manner. Is not this truly lamentable? It is written likewise, in the 'Lesser Learning,' that a woman must form no friendship and no intimacy except when ordered to do so by her parents or the 'middleman.' Even at the peril of her life must she harden her heart

like rock or metal, and observe the rules of propriety.

"In China marriage is called *returning*, for the reason that a woman must consider her husband's home as her own, and that when she marries she is therefore returning to her own home. However low and needy may be her husband's position, she must find no fault with him, but consider the poverty of the household which it has pleased Heaven to give her as the ordering of an unpropitious fate. The sage of old taught that, once married, she must never leave her husband's house. Should she forsake the 'way' and be divorced, shame shall cover her till her latest hour. A woman once married and then divorced has wandered from the 'way,' and is covered with the greatest shame, even if she should enter into a second union with a man of wealth and position.

"It is the chief duty of a girl living in the parental house to practise filial piety towards her father and mother. But after marriage her chief duty is to honor her father-in-law and her mother-in-law—to

honor them beyond her own father and mother, to love and reverence them with all ardor, and to tend them with all practice of filial piety. While thou honorest thine own parents, think not lightly of thy father-in-law. Never should a woman fail, night and morning, to pay her respects to her father-in-law and her mother-in-law. Never should she be remiss in performing any task they may require of her. With all reverence must she carry out, and never rebel against, her father-in-law's commands. On every point must she inquire of her father-in-law and mother-in-law, and abandon herself to their direction. Even if thy father-in-law and mother-in-law be pleased to hate and vilify thee, be not angry with them, and murmur not. If thou carry piety towards them to the utmost limits, and minister to them in all sincerity, it cannot be but that they will end by becoming friendly to thee.

"A woman has no particular lord. She must look to her husband as her lord, and must serve him with all worship and reverence, not despising or thinking lightly of him.

The great life-long duty of a woman is obedience. In her dealings with her husband, both the expression of her countenance and the style of her address should be courteous, humble, conciliatory, never peevish and intractable, never rude and arrogant; that should be a woman's first and chiefest care. When the husband issues his instructions, the wife must never disobey them. In doubtful cases she should inquire of her husband, and obediently follow his commands. If ever her husband should inquire of her, she should answer to the point—to answer in a careless fashion were a mark of rudeness. Should her husband be roused at any time to anger, she must obey him with fear and trembling, and not set herself up against him in anger and disputatiousness. A woman should look on her husband as if he were Heaven itself, and never weary of thinking how she may yield to her husband, and thus escape celestial castigation.

"As brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law are the brothers and sisters of a woman's husband, they deserve all her reverence. Should

she lay herself open to the ridicule and dislike of her husband's kindred, she would offend her parents-in-law, and do harm even to herself; whereas, if she lives on good terms with them, she will likewise rejoice the hearts of her parents-in-law. Again, she should cherish and be intimate with the wife of her husband's elder brother—yea, with special warmth of affection should she reverence her husband's elder brother and her husband's elder brother's wife, esteeming them as she does her own elder brother and elder sister.

"Let her never even dream of jealousy. If her husband be dissolute, she must expostulate with him, but never either vent or nurse her anger. If her jealousy be extreme, it will render her countenance frightful and her accents repulsive, and can only result in completely alienating her husband from her, and making her intolerable in his eyes. Should her husband act ill and unreasonably, she must compose her countenance and soften her voice to remonstrate with him; and if he be angry and listen not to the remonstrance, she must wait over a season, and then expostulate

with him again when his heart is softened. Never set thyself up against thy husband with harsh features and a boisterous voice.

"A woman should be circumspect and sparing in her use of words; and never, even for a passing moment, should she slander others or be guilty of untruthfulness. Should she ever hear calumny, she should keep it to herself and repeat it to none; for it is the retailing of calumny that disturbs the harmony of kinsmen and ruins the peace of families.

"A woman must ever be on the alert, and keep a strict watch over her conduct. In the morning she must rise early, and at night go late to rest. Instead of sleeping in the middle of the day, she must be intent on the duties of her household, and must not weary of weaving, sewing, and spinning. Of tea and wine she must not drink over-much, nor must she feed her eyes and ears with theatrical performances, ditties, and ballads. To temples (whether Shinto or Buddhist) and other like places, where there is a great concourse of people, she should go but sparingly till she has reached the age of forty.

"She must not let herself be led away by mediums and divineresses and enter into an irreverent familiarity with the gods, neither should she be constantly occupied in praying. If only she satisfactorily perform her duties as a human being, she may let prayer alone without ceasing to enjoy the Divine protection.

"In her capacity of wife she must keep her husband's household in proper order. If the wife be evil and profligate, the house is ruined. In everything she must avoid extravagance, and both with regard to food and raiment must act according to her station in life, and never give way to luxury and pride.

"While young, she must avoid the intimacy and familiarity of her husband's kinsmen, comrades, and retainers, ever strictly adhering to the rule of separation between the sexes; and on no account whatever should she enter into correspondence with a young man. Her personal adornments and the color and pattern of her garments should be unobtrusive. It suffices for her to be neat and

cleanly in her person and in her wearing apparel. It is wrong in her, by an excess of care, to obtrude herself on other people's notice. Only that which is suitable should be practised.

"She must not selfishly think first of her own parents, and only secondly of her husband's relations. At New-Year, on the Five Festivals, and on other like occasions she should first pay her respects to those of her husband's house, and then to her own parents. Without her husband's permission she must go nowhere; neither should she make any gifts on her own responsibility.

"As a woman rears up posterity not to her own parents, but to her father-in-law and mother-in-law, she must value the latter even more than the former, and tend them with all filial piety. Her visits, also, to the paternal house should be rare after marriage. Much more then, with regard to other friends, should it generally suffice for her to send a message to inquire after their health. Again, she must not be filled with pride at the recollection of the splendor of her parent-

al house, and must not make it the subject of her conversations.

"However many servants she may have in her employ, it is a woman's duty not to shirk the trouble of attending to everything herself. She must sew her father-in-law's and mother-in-law's garments, and make ready their food. Ever attentive to the requirements of her husband, she must fold his clothes and dust his rug, rear his children, wash what is dirty, be constantly in the midst of her household, and never go abroad but of necessity.

"Her treatment of her handmaidens will require circumspection. These low and aggravating girls have had no proper education. They are stupid, obstinate, and vulgar in their speech. When anything in the conduct of their mistress's husband or parents-in-law crosses their wishes, they fill her ears with their invectives, thinking thereby to render her a service. But any woman who should listen to this gossip must beware of the heart-burnings it will be sure to breed. Easy is it by reproaches and disobedience

to lose the love of those who, like a woman's marriage connections, were all originally strangers; and it were surely folly, by believing the prattle of a servant-girl, to diminish the affection of a precious father-in-law and mother-in-law. If a servant-girl be altogether too loquacious and bad, she should speedily be dismissed, for it is by the gossip of such persons that occasion is given for the troubling of the harmony of kinsmen and the disordering of a household. Again, in her dealings with those low people, a woman will find many things to disapprove of. But if she be forever reproving and scolding, and spend her time in bustle and anger, her household will be in a continual state of disturbance. When there is real wrong-doing, she should occasionally notice it, and point out the path of amendment, while lesser faults should be quietly dismissed without anger. While in her heart she compassionates her subordinates' weaknesses, she must outwardly admonish them with all strictness to walk in the paths of propriety, and never allow them to fall into idleness. If any is to

be succored, let her not be grudging of her money; but she must not foolishly shower down her gifts on such as merely please her individual caprice, but are unprofitable servants.

"The five worst maladies that afflict the female mind are indocility, discontent, slander, jealousy, and silliness. Without any doubt, these five maladies infest seven or eight out of every ten women, and it is from these that arises the inferiority of women to men. A woman should cure them by self-inspection and self-reproach. The worst of them all, and the parent of the other four, is silliness. Woman's nature is passive. This passiveness, being of the nature of the night, is dark. Hence, as viewed from the standard of man's nature, the foolishness of woman fails to understand the duties that lie before her very eyes, perceives not the actions that will bring down blame upon her own head, and comprehends not even the things that will bring down calamities on the heads of her husband and children. Neither when she blames and accuses and curses innocent persons, nor

when, in her jealousy of others, she thinks to set up herself alone, does she see that she is her own enemy, estranging others and incurring their hatred. Lamentable errors! Again, in the education of her children her blind affection induces an erroneous system. Such is the stupidity of her character that it is incumbent on her, in every particular, to distrust herself and to obey her husband.

"We are told that it was the custom of the ancients on the birth of a female child to let it lie on the floor for the space of three days. Even in this may be seen the likening of the man to Heaven and of the woman to Earth; and the custom should teach a woman how necessary it is for her in everything to yield to her husband the first, and to be herself content with a second place; to avoid pride, even if there be in her actions aught deserving praise; and, on the other hand, if she transgress in aught and incur blame, to wend her way through the difficulty and amend the fault, and so conduct herself as not again to lay herself open to censure; to endure without anger and indignation the

jeers of others, suffering such things with patience and humility. If a woman act thus, her conjugal relations cannot but be harmonious and enduring, and her household a scene of peace and concord.

"Parents! teach the foregoing maxims to your daughters from their tenderest years! Copy them out from time to time that they may read and never forget them! Better than garments and divers vessels which the fathers of the present day so lavishly bestow upon their daughters when giving them away in marriage were it to teach them thoroughly these precepts, which would guard them as a precious jewel throughout their lives. How true is that ancient saying, 'A man knoweth how to spend a million pieces of money in marrying off his daughter, but knoweth not how to spend a hundred thousand in bringing up his child!' Such as have daughters must lay this well to heart."

And no one sojourning a single week in Japan will deny that the *Onna Daigaku* has

been laid "well to heart"—both the good and the evil of it. I say the good and the evil; for a woman can no more dispute the many good points of "The Greater Learning for Women" than she can repress the flush of exasperation at its many and severe injustices. As regards the filial piety, several times referred to in the *Onna Daigaku*, it has been pronounced the virtue *par excellence* of both China and Japan. Of this virtue the same lucid writer from whom I have just borrowed the translation of the *Onna Daigaku* says, in his really invaluable pages entitled *Things Japanese:* "From it springs loyalty, which is but the childlike obedience of a subject to the Emperor, who is regarded, in Chinese phrase, as 'the father and mother of his people.' On these two fundamental virtues the whole fabric of society is reared. Accordingly, one of the gravest dangers to Japan at the present time arises from the sudden importation of our less patriarchal Western ideas on these points. The traditional basis of morality is sapped. There are no greater favorites with the people of

Japan than the 'Four-and-Twenty Paragons of Filial Piety' (*Ni-jū-shi Kō*), whose quaint acts of virtue Chinese legend relates. For instance, one of the Paragons had a cruel step-mother, who was very fond of fish. Never repining at her harsh treatment of him, he lay down naked on the frozen surface of the lake. The warmth of his body melted a hole in the ice, at which two carp came up to breathe. These he caught and set before his step-mother. Another Paragon, though of tender years and having a delicate skin, insisted on sleeping uncovered at night, in order that the mosquitoes might fasten on him alone, and allow his parents to slumber undisturbed. A third, who was very poor, determined to bury his own child alive, in order to have more food wherewith to support his aged mother, but was rewarded by Heaven with the discovery of a vessel filled with gold, on which the whole family lived happily ever after. A fourth, who was of the female sex, enabled her father to escape, while she clung to the jaws of the tiger which was about to devour him. But the

drollest of all is the story of Roraishi. This Paragon, though seventy years old, used to dress in baby's clothes and sprawl about upon the floor. His object was piously to delude his parents, who were really over ninety years of age, into the idea that they could not be so very old, after all, seeing that they still had such a puerile son."

One naturally thinks of parents who would submit to being made the fetiches of such monstrous immolations as selfish, cruel, inhuman, and mercilessly exacting. Nevertheless, such a reading of the situation is not even nearly correct. Japanese parents are devoted to their children, tender of them to a fault. They have not a realizing sense of the cost, while they quite overestimate the value of these sacrifices. They would be terrified at any remission of the supposed duties, and would become at once apprehensive of a dangerous future for the neglectful ones. This is easily comprehended when we remember that the parents were nurtured upon that same tough diet of obedience which they now purvey for the younger

generation. Hence the doctrines of compliant submission taught throughout the length and breadth of the picturesque home of the bamboo and fragrant cradle of the lotus.

As Mr. Chamberlain truthfully says: "No text in the Bible raises so much prejudice here against Christianity as that which commands a man to leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife. 'There you see it,' exclaims the anti-Christian Japanese, pointing to the passage. 'I always said it was an immoral religion.'"

But with all the filial devotion expected and received, with all the self-abnegation indoctrinated and practised, with all the submissiveness demanded of the baby maidens, despite their pitiable wide-eyed surprise and giggling innocent incredulity when first told of their amazing inferiority to an hour-old brother, there is not the faintest evidence of serfdom inside the smiling, hospitable *shoji* (sliding door). Indeed, if robbed of every other witchery, the rising generation of Japan would still charm us with its irrepressible, quaint gladsomeness.

Great writers and humble writers have introduced this subject—often entirely foreign to their themes—into papers or books of Nipponiana. One well-known admirer paused with his busy pen to wreathe them in this tribute: "Japanese children they allow to be most taking, with their grave little demure ways, their old-fashioned airs, their almost preternatural propriety of conduct. We shall see hundreds of small children, not more than five or six years of age, carrying, fast asleep on their shoulders, the baby of the household, its tiny smooth brown head swinging hither and thither with every movement of its small nurse, who walks, runs, sits, or jumps, flies kites, plays hop-scotch, and fishes for frogs in the gutter, totally oblivious of that infantile charge, whether sleeping or waking. If no young sister or brother be available, the husband, the uncle, the father or grandfather hitches on his back the baby, who is, happily, from its birth, preternaturally good and contented. The doctrine of original sin seems absolutely confuted by the admirable behavior

of Japanese children; they never seem to do any mischief."

It is almost universally asserted, I know, that Japanese parents love their male offspring more tenderly than their little daughters, but the closest observation of many large and small families has not convinced me of the truth of this assertion. I do not believe that real affection for either differs on the score of sex. The male child may be more welcome for a variety of reasons. If, for instance, he pokes his bridgeless button of a nose into a household of affluence, he may inherit the hoarded *yens* and the wealth of garnered art treasures that families of opulence almost invariably and justly pride themselves upon. This, through the partiality of the Japanese customs, a female child rarely does. On the other hand, if the *entrée* of the boy be into a bungalow of poverty, or one of only medium comforts, he may really be more welcome, and he may *seem* to be better loved. A reason for this storied preference is quickly perceived. Japanese fathers and mothers bear in mind that no matter how

precious the dainty, petite daughter is, they must, when she reaches a certain tender age, part with her for ever and aye. The busy needle that has for years fashioned all their garments will then be plied for the benefit of a husband and his entire family. The faithful little brown hands that have swept in the old home, dusted, washed, cooked, and served at meals—which last service even the daughters of the upper classes frequently perform as a mark of filial devotion—will all too soon be the patient, willing painstakers at another *hibashi* side. The male child, on the contrary, is to Japanese parents a comfort which abides while life endures; for a never-failing custom of the country places all the cares with which age encumbers the elders upon the shoulders of the sons, and these burdens the sons take up cheerfully and with reverence.

II

THE Japanese children of the stronger sex, who, happily, are not yet Europeanized, have their round, benign-looking heads clean shaven, except for occasional wisps behind the ears, and absurd tufts that serve to break the shimmering monotony of the vitreous crown. Indeed, the razor is an implement of supreme importance in the lives of these comical nurslings, and it begins to reap harvests of downy tassels —scant, of course, as yet — from the tiny trembling pates of babies of both sexes seven days after their birth, leaving at that period in its devastating circuit absolutely nothing but one

frail spear of hair at the nape of each tender little neck.

After two years of such harvestings, however, the locks of the little *écrues* maidens begin to assume some of the fantastical twists, the capricious twirls, the ropes, and the rolls of which I have already spoken. Multifarious as are the styles in which these jetty fringes are cut, shaven, plastered, twisted, and rolled — and there is a set fashion for almost every *ken* throughout the land — a distinct preference is displayed in the parting of the side-locks from the centre-locks, after which they are cut in a horizontal line just below the ears. These long straight side-wisps are allowed to swing and dangle unconfined, while the middle and back hair is drawn up into a stiff and glossy *coiffure* on the top of the head. This peculiar fashion, though always mirth-provoking, is never quite so amusing as when the lissome wearer of it indulges in the country's popular game for girls, called "bounce the ball." As nearly every tot one meets in Japan who is old enough to bounce the ball has the ubiquitous

suckling attached to her spine, one cannot watch the game without casting a mental vote to change the title of this solitary diversion, and rechristen it, with stricter relevancy, "bounce the baby." The game is played with a rubber ball — the thrower's sole antagonist — which is dashed upon the ground with considerable force, the object of the player being to *pirouette* and come face-about exactly in time to slap her rotund opponent back on every rebound during five consecutive rotations. In such violent twirling the long straight side-locks stand out, of course, rigidly horizontal, and all the flesh on the poor speechless jellied burden clinging with crablike tenaciousness to its little sister's back quivers alarmingly; but, withal, stranger than fiction, this tight and temptingly spankable bundle of humanity in miniature never drops a tear! Whether it silently enjoys this vigorous jolting, or has at such early age learned the fruitlessness of tears, we may not know; but it is certain that on both sides of every crowded thoroughfare, down the cryptomeria-arched

vistas of the temple grounds, up the quaint narrow leat-bordered lanes, and off on the tempting billowy verges of the luscious fields, where millet and rice vie with each other in rocking and lilting the hours away, the spirited process of slapping the ball and bouncing the baby goes uninterruptedly on.

The garments for these *mignons et mignonnes* are so nearly alike that, until the previously mentioned tufts of hair, shimmering pates, and unruffled *coiffures* are studied, it is by no means easy to distinguish the sexes. In inclement weather the bright fantastic gowns are caught up behind and thrust through the masculine girdle and feminine *obi* (sash), thereby exposing to admiring spectators the proverbially shapely foot and well-turned ankle, the firm little calf, and the satin-finished, deeply dimpled knee of the whole symmetrically formed race. But in ordinary weather these garments reach nearly to the ground, falling, indeed, only sufficiently short of it to escape being trodden upon, and to reveal, now and again, twinkling flashes of tiny pink heels—

for the ordinary Japanese child is quite innocent of hosiery. The straw *zori* (house sandal) and wooden *geta* (heavy out-of-door clog) perform but small service in the way of concealing the rosy cushions of his foot; indeed, these bits of gear are at the best but straw and wooden soles fastened lightly to the extremities by rice-cord thongs that pass between the great and the second toe. The more fortunate brothers and sisters, however, of the sockless elfin would blush to be discovered without their *tabis*—white mittenlike stockings, whose broad steel hooks and wide square eyes clasp each other snugly just above the trim ankle. The sleeves of the *kimono*, as the quaint lengthy gown is called, are large and square, descending to the knee; and I have long since discovered that they are delightfully roomy substitutes for those much-maligned but precious "catch-alls" or school-boy pockets. I have repeatedly seen dolls, grotesque jumping-jacks, no end of tops and balls, and once a very fair-sized dragon kite, emerge from these convenient snuggeries.

Babies are dressed almost exactly like their elder brothers and sisters, with perhaps the sole addition of the *kinchaku*, or charm-bag, fashioned out of a bit of bright brocade, and containing the *mamori-fuda*, a talisman whose properties are believed to guard the little ones from horses' heels, to steer them clear of the flying wheels of the *jinrikisha*, and to protect them, indeed, from catastrophes of all kinds. This grandmotherly-looking *pochette* dangles from the chubby side. There will also be found somewhere within the scant folds of a baby's *kimono* a metal ticket upon which is engraved in Chinese characters the wearer's name and address—a precaution presumably against the little creature's being lost while making its daily and very uncertain and staggering wooden-shod detours; but experience has also convinced me that for telling which is which, and who belongs to whom, the ticket is an absolute necessity in this bewildering "Paradise of Babies."

The *tsushos* (names), of difficult, and, on foreign tongues, of almost unpronounceable

sound, by which one often hears Japanese parents addressing their sons, are not infrequently sources of great surprise when translated to people unacquainted with the language. The methodical precision of the accents and the slow rolling of the proper letters lead one to suppose that the beloved scions are addressed by titles of great respect and wondrous dignity. The translation proves, however, that the boys are merely saluted, according to their birth ranks, with any sort of fancied prefix. For instance, should there be a tenth son, he is perhaps called Yoshijuro, or Tsunejuro, or maybe Soljuro, *juro* meaning ten or tenth. On the little girls, quite as oddly, the names of minerals, flowers, seasons, trees, and shrubs are bestowed, the sound of O, meaning honorable, being prefixed if the recipients belong to circles of refinement. "Gin" in Japanese means silver, and many a little "O Gin"—Honorable Silver—have I had the pleasure of knowing. I have been intimate with a gay young herd of "O Takis"—Honorable Bamboos; and a dainty ruby-lipped "O

"SLAPPING THE BALL AND BOUNCING THE BABY"

Haru" — Honorable Spring — lived in the next bungalow to mine. But the most winsome of all the dwarf buds in my tropical garden of small friends labored under the overshadowing appellation of The Honorable Chrysanthemum at the foot of the Mountain—"O Kiku Yammamoto."

From the important moment that witnesses Master Jap issuing from his strange trifle of a cot, consisting of nothing but a soft, thickly wadded square of brilliant crêpe, and a microscopic wooden pillow, suggestive of nightmares, until he seeks it again in the shadows, his is the glory of forming the sprightly centre, the most conspicuous dash of color, in every Japanese *tableau-vivant* the eye may fall upon. He is both hero and comedian, and I fancy that these honors would be borne away by him were he ever so cleanly shorn of his irresistibility, his dash, and his quaintness. He would bear them off on the score of the overwhelming numbers in which he marches upon this happy land, and, *vi et armis*, invades and apparently takes possession of it. The mountains and hills seem to

clap their green and golden hands together above his grotesque little pate for very joy, and the rivulets and rapids gurgle never-ceasing roundelays at his restless little feet. For whether gleefully frolicking with kites and balls, or striding contemplatively along, bent on some unwelcome errand of duty, to the cheery click-clack clatter of his out-of-door clog, or on whatsoever one be named of his countless movings, he swarms the narrow *doris* (streets) like an incursion of scarlet-coated, golden-belted bees. He throngs the lush lanes, crowds the fragrant by-paths, and quickens by his movements the lonely fields of rice and millet, through whose variegated verdure his heedless rollicking pate is now and again discernible, bobbing about like the rosy bald-headed buoys adance on the green stretches of the dreamful Inland Sea. The rich fertility of the archipelago is by no means exhausted in its human offshoots. They are, I am tempted to repeat, the energetic centres of all bright scenes. Indeed, I have often thought that the whole cheerful hub of Japan's gay wheel would seem to be

missing without these droll Wee Ones! One scene in particular renews itself in my memory. I look down from my lofty coign of vantage—a comfortable seat between the wheels of the easy, swaying, noiseless-spinning, merry *jinrikisha*—over a quaint huddling group of flat-hatted heads of picturesque pilgrims. Small and ofttimes pathetically unappreciated wanderers these, from the country's superb temples. Their touching, playless, uneventful lives they spend in roving from town to town and door to door in quest of *sens* with which to swell the usually well-expanded coffers of their chosen sanctuaries, striking the plaintive temple gongs with which all foreign wayfarers in Japan become so quickly familiar.

Rarely so soberly tinged, but like this scene in picturesqueness, are the countless new ones that take its place as this dissolves. Wherever there is a gathering of Japanese boys or a bevy of Japanese maidens, I promise that only the highest good-humor shall prevail. Quarrelling and fighting are never started in these convocations of dimpled

laughter and gladsomeness, and they remain refreshingly absent from them. There is a cause for this happy condition, and I could suggest none better: it is dearth of discord among the elders. Nine times out of ten wranglings and bickerings are utterly strange to the little ones. Even among the lowly, blows are exchanged only upon the rarest occasions. The father or mother who would strike a child would be shunned as a monster of barbarity. As a consequence of this example, we find in the offspring the somewhat surprising concord of gentleness with extreme youth; and likewise an ignorance, that to Young America would seem deplorable, of the use of the fists.

The Japanese child is, without doubt, successfully guided by love, and not by chastisement. The ambition to be as a boy manly, as a girl womanly, is constantly instilled. These conditions are understood to imply, first and foremost, abject obedience to parents and elders. I am by no means convinced, however, that the same treatment, even though most skilfully applied, would

educe the same blissful result in children of other nations. I have heard the unusually sunny temper of the Japanese child attributed entirely to its vegetarian diet, my informant arguing that such food as European and American children are commonly indulged in contributes to an excess of animal spirits. The settlement of such a conjecture I must leave to some wiser dietist than am I myself; but I am inclined to favor it.

An ingenious explanation of the docility of Japanese children was given by the late Mrs. Chaplin-Ayrton; but that lady, when writing, evidently forgot that the lives of these Babies of the Sun are spent almost entirely out-of-doors. She attributed their tractability to the small amount of furniture in Japanese houses. There was nothing for them to break, nothing for them to be told not to touch. Hence they were good almost in spite of themselves. Not only in consideration of the fact that in Japan the children remain but a very small portion of their lives, when awake, within-doors, but for another reason, Mrs. Chaplin-Ayrton's explanation

was especially amusing to me. It at once limned on my "memory's wall" the picture of a certain old barn in a certain Quaker city. Here all the minors of the block used to congregate, ostensibly to play. And here argument warmed into contention, contention into open rupture, and open rupture into blows. Here, semi-daily, for one whole year, two of us packed up our little dishes and went home in tears—tears that were wasted, however, for the eight or ten who were left behind were too busily engaged in hand-to-hand encounters to observe anything so trifling as tears; and here heated vows "never to speak again" were twenty times a day registered in shouts up amid the dingy old rafters: and all this where there was "nothing for us to be told not to touch!"

My own firm opinion, unswayed by the dietist, and uninfluenced by Mrs. Chaplin-Ayrton, is that play — the one thing a child loves best — is in Japan, with its unique environments, no small agency in bringing budding traits into bloom, bracing inclining boughs, and strengthening weak twigs. In

a long list of popular Japanese games, it is all but impossible to find one that does not teach the child something which should be learned. At times the guidance is circuitous, to be sure, but more often perfectly direct. The learner, however, blissfully insensible of the self-imposed instruction, indulges in the game to his glad little heart's content. There is, for instance, a much-loved equivalent to our "Pussy wants a Corner," with the difference that poor Pussy has descended into an *Oni* — Japanese devil — and that the four corners of the street or room are represented as four safe harbors of Truth, with certain shelter from all harm. Meanwhile tame tabby's sulphureted substitute renders himself awe-inspiring by means of dark head and shoulder draperies. This realistic feature adds considerably to the amusement, because, as is well known, the coalescence of fear with fun will excite in a peculiar manner a child's risibles.

The Rev. W. E. Griffis tells us, in his *Mikado's Empire* (chapter devoted to children) of a once popular game for boys that is sel-

"WANDERERS FROM THE COUNTRY'S SUPERB TEMPLES"

dom seen now. It was known as the "Genji-Heike," the names, as students of Japanese history will recall, of two once-famous clans. This game used to be much encouraged by Japanese parents, because they thought that the small victory won in the end inculcated a taste for conquest of greater moment. But the conquest being superintended by the district schoolmaster, the pleasure of the boys was probably a tempered one. By this half umpire and half peace-keeper the players were divided and ranged in two straight lines facing one another, each line representing a clan. The

genjis, usually very proud and erect, carried white flags, while the presumably dauntless *heikes* had red ones. At a given signal—the tap of a gong, the striking together of two sticks, or the roll of a drum—the two lines advanced, each with the avowed intention of seizing its adversary's flags. As may well be fancied, a severe tussle followed, not infrequently ending in a most ignominious tumble of both the flags and their gallant little bearers. But tumbles, scratches, and bruises mattered not at all to the brave Trojan, who, even though grovelling upon the earth, stanchly clutched the symbol of his clan; sometimes, indeed, in his efforts to retain this demoralized and tattered emblem, he rolled over and over with his small opponent clasped tightly to his intrepid little bosom, and with the flag-staffs broken in bits between them. "A red-letter moment, and a highly propitious attitude for a good pummelling, to be indulged in by the hero on top," perhaps the reader is reflecting; but this was never taken advantage of, in that way, for although the contest was earnest,

it was never bitter. This may have been due, however, in a moderate measure, to the fact that if a boy lost his temper, he was sent in disgrace from the field to find it, by the tutor, umpire, and peace-keeper, who, at the expiration of the allotted time, again sounded his gong, struck his sticks, or rolled his drum, thereby indicating that hostilities were over. Of course the side which had secured the larger number of its enemy's flags was deemed victorious.

When one first hears tiny Japanese tongues tripping with inconceivable agility over the difficult names of the sixty post-stations between Tokio and Kioto, one marvels how the feat is accomplished; but a solution of the mystery is obtainable in any toy-shop for the insignificant sum of six *sens*—the price of a board, some lilliputian blocks, a miniature dice-box, and three baby dice. The last-named are things of which all Japanese youngsters, male and female, are passionately fond. Scattered over the garish tricolored board are brilliant pictures of the post-stations, in correct local sequence, each with the

name printed above, and the number of miles between that town and the next printed beneath. Kioto is at the farther end of the board, and on its pictured square is erected a tempting little pile of *shiruko* — sweet rice-cake. Successful throws from the dice-box advance, and unsuccessful ones retard, the eager juvenile players in their aggravatingly slow march to the sugary goal. As one would naturally suppose, the player arriving first at Kioto pockets—or, to be scrupulously exact, *sleeves*—the *shiruko.*

Playing-cards are vastly important factors in this *entrepôt* of amusements—as we may call Japan—and nearly every child one meets carries a pack in his or her sleeve. The games played with these cards, which are oblong, about two inches in length and one inch in width, also impart their dainty lessons. The most instructive of all, a perfect flower of a game, is called "A Hundred Verses of a Hundred Poets." This pretty pastime, by somewhat intricate processes of dealing, drawing, reading, reciting, and guessing, helps to teach the little ones rhythm, and to

familiarize them with the names and works of the standard poets of Japan. Card games may also be had for making the acquaintance, in a similar manner, of historians, for becoming intimate with heroes, and for forming a good-fellowship with the prose writers of the country.

I have seen in use, or in the *kwan-ko-ba* (toy bazar), a great variety of games intended to impart information usually found only in geographies. There are others whose aim is to teach history. Some gently inculcate obedience. There is a whole regiment of deservedly popular games showing how heroic it is to curb one's evil inclinations, and to beat all selfishness out of the heart, how royal it is to be cleanly, how noble to be superior to petty jealousies, how grand to be above suspicion, and how paltry and despicable to be avaricious; while no small number exist whose objects are to incite scorn of pain in all parts, cuts of all shapes, and bruises of all shades.

The *kwan-ko-ba* is ablaze at all seasons, and besides toys, gaudily covered juvenile books

of all kinds are procured thereat; but, as appears most natural among a fanciful people, the Wee Ones best love the fairy-tales, of which there is a bewildering supply. *The Tongue-cut Sparrow*, *The Battle of the Monkey and the Crab*, *The Old Man who Made the Dead Trees to Blossom*, and *The Lucky Tea-kettle* stand valiantly up in the hearts of their loyal subjects against *Little Red Riding-hood*, *The Three Bears*, and even *Mother Goose*, all of which have attempted, unsuccessfully, to supplant the indigenous favorites. And to readers who are not wilfully blind, each of these four old standard tales points a pretty and interesting moral.

Aside from the endless forms of out-door and in-door amusements in vogue in Japan, and the fairy-tales and card games, there are innumerable strolling companies who dedicate their whole lives to the entertainment of the wheedling babies. This they effect sometimes through the instrumentality of the most engaging raree-shows, which exhibit the inside life, stirring and brilliant, of a *daimyō's*

*yashiki.** There are, moreover, street theatrical performances in which trained children and be-*kimonoed* monkeys are employed to contend with each other for the honor of making the delighted little street-corner and curbstone audiences shout with laughter. One popular diversion consists in the cooking and moulding of rice gluten into types of animals best known, and into *jinrikishas*, fans, and umbrellas right before the bright, eager eyes of the surprised crowd of children. Indeed, of such importance is it considered that the hearts of the Japanese Wee Ones should be gladdened and their easily excited laughter provoked, that even the hawker of sugared peas, candied beans, starch patties, *shiruko* and *sushi*—a sweet cake plastered over with vinegar, fish, and sea-weed — beats a drum, sings a song, spins a yarn, performs two or three legerdemain tricks, and finally, just before moving on, cavorts about in a weird fandango, all to the intense delight of his baby patrons.

* A palace of the landed nobility under the old feudal system.

But of all the seemingly exhaustless means by which smiles and dimples are drawn forth in this infants' paradise, to me the most tempting diversion—one in which I should be nothing loath to join myself—is furnished by a little old woman who appears now and then, as if by magic, in some street that she knows to be swarming with little folks. She is at once surrounded by dozens of jetty heads and eager forms, raised up to her on the tiptoe of expectation like a great cluster of diminutive human sunflowers turning to their sun for all the benefits of life. This little old woman, coarsely clad but scrupulously neat, as I have ever seen her, carries a charcoal brazier, in which a ruddy fire glows, swung from a bamboo pole that teeters across her right shoulder. From the pole depend a griddle, several ladles and cake-turners, a big blue-and-white jar of batter, and another of *shoyu* sauce—a much-liked brewing of white beans and salt. This complete equipment is to let by the hour for five *sens*, and with it, I need scarcely say, both boys and girls spend felicitous moments stirring, ladling, baking, spreading with *shoyu*

sauce, and devouring their own grotesquely shaped griddle-cakes.

Woven into the labyrinth of instructive amusements offered to the Wee Ones are opportunities for an occasional all-day attendance at the theatre, and Master Jap gleefully repairs in the early morning to his vaudeville or comédie japonaise under the protective escort of his parents and his elder brothers and sisters.

Arriving at the play-house, Master Jap scrambles over the slender rails—he is on tenter-hooks now—that separate the odd little theatre pens, seats himself upon the floor, and cautiously deposits beside him his lacquered box of saccharine mixtures, of many kinds and flavors, and his jar of rice—hot tea being served by the ushers throughout the livelong day. And now he prepares himself to be alternately delighted and horrified by the heroic loves and tragic deaths of the heroes and heroines of the old historical drama. His watchful parents entertain here the same hope that animates them in choosing his other forms of amusement, viz., that of inspiring

"THE HAWKER OF SUGARED PEASE AND CANDIED BEANS"

the Wee One with ambitious tastes, and of fitting him out with a dauntless front, softened with a gentle halo of refinement. Grandparents, parents, sisters just blooming into the *coiffure* that denotes "sweet sixteen," * and full-grown brothers I have seen sit through the greater part of the day, and especially during the telling incidents of the piece, with their eyes glued to the children they bring with them. They desire, of course, to see some evidence of the existence of a chord responsive to their instructive manipulations; and I have never yet witnessed a disappointment—that is, if the chord's existence and harmonious echo may be considered proven by the little faces that unconsciously reflect every odd grimace, every scowl, sneer, and smile of the invincible hero and timorous heroine striding and posing before their enraptured eyes, by little fists convulsively clinched, and by ebbing and flowing tides of "gooseflesh" sensations that chase one another up

* A certain twist of the hair and certain prods with pins — in, out, and through the twist—tell the age of the wearer.

and down and down and up the keenly erect little spines.

Next to the theatre outing, I believe the excursion Japanese children are most fond of is the jaunt frequently taken to some of the beautiful temples in which their emerald archipelago abounds. Possibly, however, this seeming precocity in treading the path of righteousness will not be so difficult of comprehension when I add that a visit to a Japanese temple does not mean that the Wee Ones shall sit for an hour or more in constrained positions listening to words they do not understand; indeed, nothing could be further from worship, and children comprehend it, than discomfort of any kind. Upon reaching the temple grounds the tiny hands are immersed in the waters of the sacred well. The child then approaches the temple entrance, sheds the toy clogs at the door, enters, stands for a while invoking a blessing upon his or her head by softly clapping hands, casts a few *sens* upon the snow-white matting, and withdraws to the unequalled shade of the splendid cryptomeria trees with

which nearly all Japanese temples are surrounded. Here young Japan disports itself at will, tumbling in the soft grass that borders a deep blue lake, in which perhaps hundreds of fishes, pets of the priests, live, move, and have their being. These fishes, since they are blissfully ignorant of hook or line, are accustomed to rise to the surface on being summoned, and they are fed three times daily. Never being frightened or disturbed in any way, the denizens of the temple aquaria are as tame as pet kittens. I may add here that I once saw six or eight little boys and girls in the grounds of the famous temple of the Mikado, at Kioto, lying at full length on the bank of the pretty lake that coils around the beautiful parklike grounds. The children's palms, full of crumbs, were extended just above the water. The fishes had been called to this particular part of the lake by a series of sibilations, and at the moment of my arrival they were actually sucking the crumbs out of the six or eight fleshy hand bowls held out to them.

These temple outings begin the thirtieth

day after baby's birth, and while I cannot say that the babe entirely appreciates this first visit, or finds in it the unalloyed joy that characterizes the later ones of which I have just spoken, the visit is, nevertheless, an affair of great importance and ceremony. This thirtieth-day celebration—a faint reflection of our christening day—is called the *miza maeri*, and upon its occasion the hope of the family is dressed in the finest silk or crêpe the parents can afford, every article of the ceremonious toilette being made expressly for this momentous event. Between the tiny shoulders and upon the flowing sleeves of the *haori* (the little outside coat of silk or crape) is stamped the crest* of the cooing débutant. When arrayed in its gorgeous outfit, the little one, escorted by every member of the family, is carried to some chosen temple, at the entrance of which all discard their foot-gear, and, solemnly passing within, proceed to place the cherub under the life-long protection of the temple's patron saint.

* No family in Japan is too poor or too lowly to possess a crest.

An oblation is now offered to the chosen deity, as handsome a present as the family can afford is ceremoniously made to the priest, and after a few blessings have been pronounced the baby is considered to have obtained divine protection.

This ceremony occupies but a few moments of the baby's valuable time. That is important, as the all-important thirtieth day is scarcely long enough for all the jubilations designed to be crowded within it.

Upon returning home our already weary Wee One holds an all-day reception, to which have been bidden all the relatives and friends who have recognized the new-comer's existence by sending presents of toys and pieces of silk and crêpe. These remembrances being all carefully noted, are suitably acknowledged during the celebration. Rice—which serves in this country a medley of purposes, from the settlement of debts to the assuaging of hunger—is usually considered the correct acknowledgment, and is presented in a lacquered box resting upon a lacquered tray, both of which are covered with the signifi-

cant *fuska.** When one remembers the proverbial cleanliness and stilted politeness of this race of little brown people, it seems curiously contradictory that the box and tray accompanying the donations of rice are, in conformity with the most exacting ceremonial codes, returned unwashed — unless, indeed, an enemy, who has worn the mantle of friendship in order to be bidden to the little one's reception, should desire to wish the child ill luck, in which case both box and tray would be sent back clean. However, I do not believe that such an affront has ever been offered to parents since the ancient custom loomed into popularity. The reason of my doubt is that so grave a mark of rudeness and unkindness, alien to the feelings of this tender-hearted people, would have been held in lasting remembrance, whereas tradition records no instance of the kind.

Straggling through an entire Japanese year, bobbing up fragrantly at odd intervals,

* A square of highly ornamented silk, satin, or brocade, having the family's crest worked upon it somewhere either in gold or silk.

are the æsthetically pretty feasts of flowers —that of the cherry in April, the wistaria in June, the lotus in August, and the chrysanthemum in November. At each recurrence of these floral feasts the little ones are taken to whatever groves of blossoms and ponds of lotuses are most famous for profusion and perfection, where they spend a whole delightful day in absolute devotion to nature. And *á propos* of the passionate love of flowers felt by the Japanese — "it would be a positive cruelty to separate them," a certain writer has truthfully said — that extravagance may at first seem to the stranger to border upon downright affectation, but a few days of ordinary observation and an occasional glimpse at the flower-worshipping of even the very young children will prove to that stranger the error of hasty censure, and bring conviction that in the heart of the Nipponite the flower passion is as sincere as it is innate. One frequently notices children tenderly stroking great boughs of bloom, or fondly fingering the long sea-green hair of the lovely feathery bamboo without one un-

gentle touch, and without showing the slightest desire to mutilate them—a desire that would be the first ambition of the little ones of my acquaintance over seas.

Such is the love of flowers, leaves, and branches in Japan that the etiquette of their arrangement is considered a greater accomplishment than music, painting, or drawing, and no child's education is complete who has not mastered the "Aristocracy of Flowers." Ever since the days of Sen-no-Rikyu, who was the founder and first instructor in the art of floral philosophy, and who flourished in the sixteenth century, teachers of this strange but far from unattractive art have spent much time instructing their young pupils as to correct and incorrect combinations of branches, ornamental leaves, and flowers. Those who gain the greatest proficiency in this art, or, as we should say, are graduated from it with honors, are admitted to be in possession of the following ten powers:

Chobo furin. — A character of eternal gentleness.

Somoku meichi.—Intimate knowledge and

"THIS COMPLETE EQUIPMENT IS TO LET BY THE HOUR FOR FIVE SENS"

acquaintance with the constitution of flowers, leaves, and trees.

Koishiko.—The honor of fraternizing with persons of good birth and high social rank.

Muitanen.—A peaceful heart, commingled with the happy faculty of rising above all care.

Sejijo joko.—An easy bearing when in the society of persons of noble birth.

Dokuraku ni katarazu.—The power of depending upon no one for entertainment.

Showaky ribtsu.—The power of self-control.

Seikon gojo.—Robust health and purity of mind.

Shimbutsu haizo.—Spiritual-mindedness.

Shujin aikio.—The esteem of all mankind.

The eight foremost princes of floral *noblesse* are the chrysanthemum, the maple, the peony, the wistaria, the cherry, the narcissus, the rhododendron, and the iris.

Upon this fascinating subject of floral education Sir Edwin Arnold discourses as follows:

"What the floral artist in Japan most contemns and avoids is tame, duplicated symmetry. Nature will have none of it, nor he, her scholar. If, as in her butterflies and double leaves, she must be equilibrated, she redeems it with gorgeous color, or by varied back or edge to the leaf. But you may balance asymmetry, which the Japanese flower-lover effects by a scientific disposition of his stems and leaf masses. It is not possible to give here the elaborate nomenclature of his *shins* and *sôs*. He has names for all important parts in the display of his flower-vase. For a triple arrangement the terms of *chichi* (father), *haha* (mother), *ten* (heaven), are used. For the quintuple form, *chiuwo* (centre), *kita* (north), *minami* (south), *higashi* (east), *nishi* (west); also *tsuchi* (earth), *hi* (fire), *mitzu* (water), *kane* (metal), *ki* (wood); also *ki-iro* (yellow), *aka* (red), *huro* (black), *shiro* (white), *ao* (blue). There must by no means occur *negashi*, or long streaming sprays on both sides of the grouping. Certain defects in the cross-cutting of branches or stalks must be heedfully guarded

against — 'window-making,' when these intersect so as to suggest loop-holes; 'lattice-making,' when they cross to give the idea of trellis-work. Parallelism is held detestable — it must be presented from no point of sight; and albeit the flower-structure is intended to be studied and enjoyed where it stands upon the *toku no ma*, or place of honor, from a front view, still the composition must endure to be regarded with artistic satisfaction from right to left."

The subject, however, of floral education must be touched gingerly; to grasp it incautiously is to seize the poles of a magnetic battery and be unable to let go; to wade into it is to be carried out into an ocean of perplexity, and stranded on the shores where old familiar subjects will appear as strange as they might in Mars or Jupiter. For in these flower compositions there are sexes in leaves (the back of a leaf is female and the front male), sexes of color (yellow, blue, and white are female, and purple, pink, and red are male); there are symbols, harmonies, discords, proper seasons, proper months, and

"the locality of production, whether mountain, moor, or river," and all of these things must be considered in connection with this wellnigh exhaustless subject.

Everywhere—north, south, east, and west—the genial offspring of this gladsome land seem to thrive upon little else than well-boiled rice, which, as rule, is given to them hot at "tiffin," as the mid-day meal is called in the East, and in any desired quantities; while the same staple article is served to them cold for breakfast and supper, with hot tea poured over it. Our precocious babies, be it known, begin their tea drinking at the tender age of two years, and with neither milk nor sugar to attract them to the tea-cup's brim. There is almost no consumption of cow's milk throughout Japan; indeed, the old-fashioned Nipponite is aghast at foreigners who can gulp down, without so much as a wry face, the "milk of a brute," as, in accents charged with horror, he terms the best-loved beverage of many; for there is a stubbornly unalterable belief among the more primitive that infants nourished upon

cow's milk will, in the course of what I think might be correctly called inhuman events, sprout horns. On extra occasions the little ones are given pickles and fruit, both of which are mixed in with their rice. But the most welcome events are those which are considered of sufficiently high importance to sanction the emergence of the cherished preserved radish from its cosey round tub of rice bran and salt.

III

IT will be seen that a chapter on child life at court, and child life within the confines of the old *daimyōs'* mystery-favoring *yashikis*, must, of necessity, be brief. The doings within these charmed peripheries are seldom known to the outsider. But any work with my Wee One as its engaging hero would be incomplete without such a chapter. A child's life behind the palatial *shoji*, however, is neither brother nor sister, nor even "thrice-removed" cousin, to the existence that the plebeian Wee One enjoys.

First of all, in the mysterious world that is enclosed by the surrounding moat, there are none of those delightfully premature launches "pig-a-back" that the less nobly born nurslings are given. There are no agreeably irregular hours for slumber, no unexpected, hence welcome and profound, drop-

pings-off to sleep, with restless bumpy little spines for couches, and the napes of warm and rosy little necks for pillows.

An imperial baby is coddled in the lap not only all day, but all night. It rests through most of the irksome moments when sleep refuses to release it within a careful circling of arms, and upon its poor little knees, in order that they may be rendered flexible—an absolute necessity, according to Japanese ideas of grace,* and a wearying and a patience-demanding effort to achieve.

* A solemnly punctilious banquet was given by the genial young Count M—— in my honor at an interesting old palace. The service comprised twenty elaborate courses. *Saké*, the proper preliminary, followed by *suimono*, a vegetable curd soup; *kuchi tori*, a vegetable omelette; *tsubo*, stewed sea-weed; *umani-ni*, a pheasant served with a sort of mayonaise of lotuses; *chawan-mushi*, a second soup, consisting of tiny fish and monstrous mushrooms; pickled *daikon* (apparently the progenitor of the radish kingdom, the dimensions of each one having been, before the pickling, fully three feet long and six inches in diameter); rice, tea, and a host of complicated and for the most part nauseous etcæteras. These twenty courses, the exacting rules, and, under the circumstances, exasperating formalities observed, kept the party three hours upon bended knees, convincing me that flexibility therein is an absolute necessity to comfort in Japan—if not, indeed, a forefender of paralysis. The attitude is ac-

The etiquette of such households as we are now prying into is as complicated as it is inscrutable. The child so fortunate, or unfortunate if you will, as to be born under a lucky star, almost immediately after learning to rest with ease and comfort upon its knees, is expected to blossom out into a little amber model of propriety and refinement.

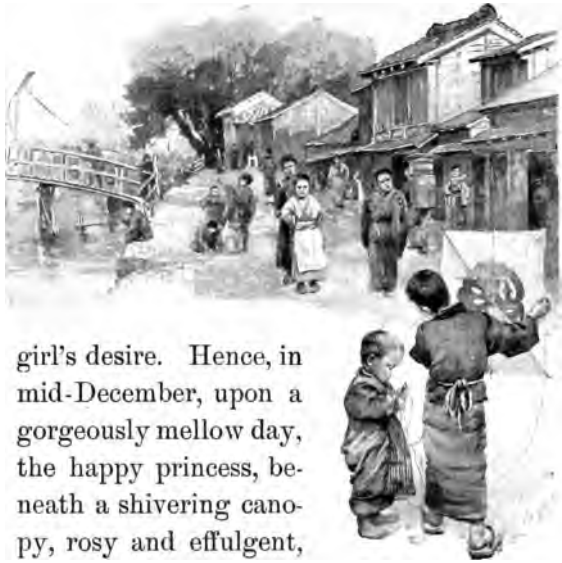
The lives led by these birth-hampered children are rigidly sequestered. Their connection with the lower, and I ween really happier, circles is severely prohibited. Indulgence in certain delightfully hilarious games that enchant a round and rosy little multitude outside palatial gates is denied to them. They must go the daily rounds of exact formalities which they have, happily, with the ever-ready Japanese logic, learned in actual babyhood to regard as inevitable tortures that cannot possibly be cured, and

quired; but the growth of the limbs is very materially arrested, as was recently proven by Japanese army surgeons. They, on taking measurements, confirmed the truth of a frequently doubted statement, namely, that the under-height of the Japanese is due entirely to the deficient development of the legs.

hence must be gracefully endured. But they are not one whit the less dear to their parents than are the roving little butterflies that fleck the lanes, dot the *doris*, and lend, as I have said, brilliant color to every Japanese *tableau-vivant*. Indeed, Japanese parents of the seemingly coldly exclusive class spend much time slyly pitying their Wee Ones, on whom etiquette's severe codes make such extravagant demands. They are as sincerely beloved as are the free-and-easy Wee Ones; and they, returning love for love, fit their tender flesh, with a mildness to me pitiful, into all the hindering grooves wrought out for it. As if to prove that the parental affection over the moat equals that bestowed upon the offspring of parents this side the forbidding fosse, there is often recited a pretty jingle, historically true, which in prose runs as follows:

Years ago there was a young princess of the famous Tokugawa household. For many months she had been too ill to observe the changes of Japan's brilliant quartette of seasons. Had she been well, she might have

seen their reflection in her fondly doting mother's robes; for the ladies' *kimonos,* in those gracefully æsthetic days, always mimicked in profuse embroidery the exuberant bloom of the little world surrounding them. Each dainty little hostess, consequently, at the still popular chrysanthemum, cherry, wistaria, and rhododendron fêtes, looked an older and perhaps faded sister to the blossoms about her as she trailed through beds or beneath boughs of prodigal bloom, in a flowing crêpe robe carelessly sprinkled from open neck to padded hem with their delusively embroidered counterparts. At last the little princess planted hope of her recovery in the hearts of her fond parents and attached attendants. She opened her long-closed eyes, and announced in feeble accents that, should she be allowed to give a cherry-blossom fête, she could almost promise to live. The month was December. That fact weighed insignificantly against the hope, the love, and the Tokugawa *yens* placed in the opposing scale; and it had not substance to cast even the shadow of an opposition to the beloved little



"FREE-AND-EASY WEE ONES"

girl's desire. Hence, in mid-December, upon a gorgeously mellow day, the happy princess, beneath a shivering canopy, rosy and effulgent, gave a famous garden-party. To-day it furnishes Japanese history with the most poetical proof of parental indulgence that the Nipponite world has ever exhibited. No one has ever ventured to estimate what this silken imposture cost the illustrious *shogun* and humoring father.

The writer has repeatedly seen the wilderness of boughs that protrude from the oldest and most famous *sakura*-trees in Japan, and those trees huddle close over acres and acres

of shaven lawns. That wilderness of boughs this tender-hearted ruler of an empire simulated in silk. At his behest workmen in silk flowers, artists, perfumers, and embroiderers, in the absence of the natural methods of warm sunshine and rain, caused this whole maze to blossom beneath the touching radiance of a father's love. One hesitates, appalled, on the threshold of an estimate that even to the most cautious appraiser must be stunning in its five-figured importance. "An unusual tonic!" the reader is at liberty to remark. He will even be forgiven a sceptical arching of the brows upon being told that the tonic was efficacious. The pretty princess lived to laugh heartily in after-years over the indulgent deception practised upon her, and to relate it to seven children of her own, to five grandchildren, and to one great-grandchild.

The irksome details that make up the formal little existences of the children within these barred enclosures, whose guardians are so liberal with their *yens* and *sens*, and so illiberal with freedom, seem to be poured into a never-full sieve of formalities, through which

they go trickling off into countless channels of all sorts of eccentric observances; and every one of them has been handed down from generation to generation, the most minute and particular attention being given to all that concerns the important household itself.

The Japanese of all classes hold an ill-bred child in great contempt; but the upper classes consider the mastering of their country's unpliant collection of motley codes of etiquette indispensable. There is in Japan a fear, a horror of a mother's natural impulse to make the path of childhood as easy as possible for her Wee Ones. And for this reason the sons of many noble families are brought up in separate establishments, where they and their manners are warily, continuously, harassingly observed and corrected at every turn by some trusted male friend of the parents, himself of noble birth. These rigidly reared little princes and lords have also an entirely separate band of retainers, who are expected to *seem* to exist only to do their little master's slightest bidding. I noted the manner of this

when I went up to Nikko on the first train of cars that ever pierced, with seeming sacrilege, its dear, green, religious old heart. The alarming desecration, occurring upon a popular feast-day, brought out an immense concourse of people of note. Among them was a little son of the Emperor, who, in a gorgeous crêpe gown, was followed through the excited throng of on-lookers by a long line of his own private retainers. Six of these retainers—the best-built and fleetest of foot, with the little fellow hoisted high on their shoulders in a brilliant gold-lacquer palanquin—ran or walked, according to quick commands given in a shrill, childish treble, or in response to a sudden wave of a tiny hand.

The Empress of Japan—being the sweetest of all sweet creatures, a womanly woman—has upon many occasions openly evinced her deep interest in the Wee Ones of Japan, giving freely to all institutions that exist to benefit them in any way, even practising all sorts of touching little economies that she may be able to swell her contributions to

certain charities that most interest her. Of the charming Empress and her quiet patronage of deserving institutions the *Japan Mail* has thus spoken:

"The life of the Empress of Japan is an unvarying routine of faithful duty-doing and earnest charity. The public, indeed, hears with a certain listless indifference, engendered by habit, that her Majesty has visited this school, or gone round the wards of that hospital. Such incidents seem to fall naturally into the routine of the imperial day's work. Yet to the Empress the weariness of long hours spent in class-rooms or laboratories, or by the beds of the sick, must soon become quite intolerable did she not contrive, out of the goodness of her heart, to retain a keen and kindly interest in everything that concerns the welfare of her subjects. That her Majesty does feel this interest, and that it grows rather than diminishes as the years go by, every one knows who has been present on any of the innumerable occasions when the promoters of some charity or the directors of some educational institution have pre-

sented, with merciless precision, all the petty details of their subjects or organizations for the examination of the imperial lady. The latest evidence of her Majesty's benevolence is, however, more than usually striking. Since the founding of the Tōkyō Charity Hospital, where so many poor women and little children are treated, the Empress has watched the institution closely, has bestowed on it patronage of the most active and helpful character, and has contributed handsomely to its funds. Little by little the hospital grew, extending its sphere of action and enlarging its ministrations, until the need of more capacious premises—a need familiar to such undertakings—began to be strongly felt. The Empress, knowing this, cast about for some means of assisting this project. To practise strict economy in her own personal expenses, and to devote whatever money might thus be saved from her yearly income to the aid of the hospital, appears to have suggested itself to her Majesty as the most feasible method of procedure. The result is that a sum of 8446 *yens*, 90 *sens*, and 8 *rins*

has just been handed over to Dr. Takagi, the chief promoter and mainstay of the hospital, by Viscount Kagawa, one of her Majesty's chamberlains. There is something picturesque about these *sens* and *rins*. They represent an account minutely and faithfully kept between her Majesty's unavoidable expenses and the benevolent impulse that constantly urged her to curtail them. Such gracious acts of sterling effort command admiration and love."

The conduct of this ideal woman upon a certain sad occasion her devoted subjects are never weary of describing. Prince Iwakura, a fearless Japanese leader in the momentous days of the crisis—from which the lovely archipelago is still trembling in its subsidence to what seems assured stability—lay dying in his *yashiki*. The Empress announced her intention of paying Iwakura a visit in person. The poor prince, weak, and, as I have said, about to die, was thrown into a dangerous state of excitement upon receiving the news, but he managed to borrow from some hidden nervous force sufficient strength to grasp his

writing-box and brushes and to paint her an urgent but most respectful request not to think of coming to him. He forced upon her as excuse for declining so great an honor the fact of his rapidly approaching death, and his consequent inability to acknowledge her visit with even a sixteenth part of the homage it demanded. He begged her to deign to kindly consider how ill he must be when it remained an impossibility to throw off the malady even for her entertainment. In reply, winged with speed, came a dear little missive whose import was as follows:

"I come not as your Empress, but as the daughter of your fond well-wisher and coadjutor, and as your own anxious friend."

Shorn of all ostentation and display, the Empress arrived, and remained beside her grateful subject until his final summons.

Some years ago, when the imperial palace was burned, the unselfish Empress, amid all the excitement and discomfort she was for the nonce called upon to endure in a hasty flight to a comfortless old *yashiki*, thinking first of her subjects' natural concern for her

comfort, sat down and wrote them a dainty little rhyme, which proclaimed as erroneous the report that she changed her residence. It coyly asserted that her home had always been in the hearts of her people, and that she sincerely hoped that neither by flame nor by cold could she be driven from that dear abode.

All this is perhaps a slight wandering from my wee darlings, but it will serve to introduce to the reader the most gracious of women. She herself is childless in a bewildering world of children. She is doomed to see, should her sweet life be spared, a son of her husband — that son the attractive young Prince Haru—but never a child of her own, ascend the throne. And she attempts to console herself for this especial grief by being the firmest friend my Japanese Wee One, whether well or lowly born, has ever possessed. Schools for the patrician children who are some day to fill the constantly occurring vacancies at court are deep in her interest. At the opening of the Tōkyō school for daughters of nobles, indeed, not only was

the Empress present, but she personally addressed the scholars at considerable length. As has been said, everything for the learner's good is of tender importance to her Majesty. Not long since the conservatives, a few whom still exist, were not a little shocked to learn that their Empress had personally visited a crowded ward of ailing Wee Ones in a charity hospital, and with her own fair hands given each little female sufferer a beautifully dressed doll, and each little male patient some odd interesting toy.

Does it not seem almost a plea for lament that one so devoted as the Empress is to children should not only find herself personally upon a childless throne, but that that throne should be in the heart of a nation notorious for profligacy?

The dear little ladies in waiting upon the Empress enter court life at the early age of ten years, that they may gain a thorough knowledge of the severe etiquette thereto pertaining, and that they may be reared sufficiently unspotted from the world to be allowed to enjoy daily proximity to her

Imperial Highness. The training for such prominent posts seems almost cruel in its methodical punctiliousness. But if a little lady thus trained frets under the worrying curb put upon her every thought and action, she forgets all about it when she is once ceremoniously installed as a maid of honor. Thereupon she becomes an individual of eminence and superiority, and the mistress of her own dainty apartments in the palace. She has her own servants to keep everything in order, to wait upon her, and to cook and serve her meals, and she is the recipient of the generous Empress's many favors and lavish gifts.

So quaint a little figure was the vanished *daimyō's* daughter, as presented to us by Miss Bacon, that we must almost deplore the advancement that has caught her up in its whirling draperies and wiped her out of existence. Says Miss Bacon of this pathetic little figure:

"When we know that the average Japanese girl is brought up strictly by her own mother, and is thoroughly drilled in obedience,

and in all that is proper as regards etiquette and the duties of women, we can imagine the narrowness of the education of the *daimyō's* poor little daughter, surrounded from childhood with numerous attendants of the strictest sort to teach her all that is proper according to the highest and severest standards. Sometimes, by the whim or the indulgence of parents, or through exceptional circumstances in her surroundings, a *samurai's** daughter became more independent, more self-reliant, or better educated than others in her rank, but such opportunities never came to the more carefully reared noble's daughter.

"From her earliest childhood she was addressed in the politest and most formal way, so that she could not help acquiring polite manners and speech. She was taught etiquette above all things, so that no rude action or speech would disgrace her rank, and that she should give due reverence to her superiors, courtesy to equals, and polite condescension to inferiors. She was taught es-

* The military class.

pecially to show kindness to the families under the rule of her father, and was early told of the noble's duty to protect and love his retainers as a father loves and protects his children. From childhood presents were made in her name to those around her, often without her previous knowledge or permission, and from them she would receive profuse thanks—lessons in the delights of beneficence which could not fail to make their impression on the child princess. Even to inferiors she used the polite language,* and never the rude, brusque speech of men, or the careless phrases and expressions of the lower classes.

"The education of the *daimyō's* daughter was conducted entirely at home. Instead of

* "The Japanese language is full of expressions showing different shades of meaning in the politeness or respect implied. There are words and expressions which superiors in rank use to inferiors, or *vice versa*, and others used among equals. Some phrases belong especially to the language of the high-born, just as there are common expressions of the people. Some verbs in this extremely complex language must be altered in their termination according to the degree of honor in which the subject of the action is held in the speaker's mind."

going out to masters for instruction, she was taught by some one in the household—one of her father's retainers, or, perhaps, a member of her own private retinue. Teachers for certain branches came from outside; and these were not expected to give the lesson within a certain time and hurry away, but they would remain, conversing, sipping tea, and partaking of sweetmeats, until their noble pupil was ready to receive them. Hospitality required that the teacher be offered a meal after the lesson, and this meal etiquette would not permit him to refuse, so that both teacher and pupil must spend much time in waiting for each other and for the lesson.

"Pursued in this leisurely way, the education of the noble's daughter could not advance very rapidly, and it usually ended with an extremely early marriage; and the girl wife would sometimes play with her doll in the new home until the living baby took its place to the young mother."

IV

AS marked as is the dissimilarity of the Japanese child to our own wee one, perhaps there are no lights in which the former is shown that set off this dissimilitude like the quaint rays of the educational sun which illumines his path. Behold him, then, approaching the frail, one-story, half-paper and half-wood school-house he attends — repairing thereto as one of the picturesque group of three, four, or five happy youngsters, armed with copy-book, *seroban* (of which more anon), huge paper umbrella, and rice-

jar, the last swinging from a round little arm in a gayly brocaded bag—the avenue he is on and the school-house and surroundings all enveloped in an atmosphere and hue of *naïve* and antique quaintness. In due time he is inside the tidy little school-room, with its snowy matting, its bright *futons* (squares of wadded silk or crêpe upon which to rest the knees, chairs being unknown luxuries to the un-Europeanized Japanese) cast upon the floor at regular intervals, one for each abecedarian and one for the teacher, and with its many odd little chests of drawers, miniature *chiffonniers*, in which are kept the books, *serobans*, India-ink, and brushes not in use. The prevailing politeness in this proverbially well-mannered archipelago goes methodically along hand in hand with all concerns; in fact, the very gates of the day swing asunder upon hinges of etiquette, the first school-room rule demanding that the schools should all be assembled when their teacher arrives, in order to bid him good-morning in a body. Familiar with the peculiar clash of his wooden clog, the scholars

range themselves in a straight line at the first announcement of his approach, and, at the first glimpse caught of him, draw in their breath with the long hissing sound that has been described in a previous chapter as expressing awed regard. The formality over, the dwarfish tutor is saluted with absurdly low bows and a general cheery clatter of words, in which will nearly always be distinguishable the exclamations of "*Ohyo!*" (Good-day!), "*Irrashai!*" (Please deign to enter!), and "*Oide nasi!*" (Be pleased to make your honorable entrance!)

Every act and word of the above greeting the recipient considers as an evidence of respectful affection; and he never fails to say so, nor to express the sincere hope that all his little pupils are well.

This pretty prelude over, the schoolmaster, squatting upon his *futon*—all the students immediately obeying his example by dropping noiselessly upon theirs—begins the long day's work by calling aloud the number of its lesson in reading, To this he turns in the queer little book; and—as if to

emphasize the dissimilarity before referred to of his methods to those of his Western rival, who, perhaps not a block away, is teaching a class in English, in French, in German, or maybe in Italian, to read from the left to right and from top to bottom—the Japanese dominie reads from bottom to top and from right to left. This performance he repeats often and slowly, so that all the learners, obtuse and apt, may be able to recite the lesson after him; which they do, first in concert, and then each one separately, until it has been unquestionably memorized. As each of the difficult Chinese characters is sounded, the alphabetarian prods it in the reading-book with a rounded stick, in order that he may become as familiar with its appearance as with its significance. Following the reading-lesson comes one in writing, during which all the seemingly impossible characters employed in the lecture are practised with brushes dipped in India-ink and water. Very quickly the copy-books become wet, and soon quite soggy. In passing a Japanese school-house yard, at almost any hour of the day, one

"ARMED WITH COPY-BOOK, SEROBAN, HUGE PAPER UMBRELLA, AND RICE-JAR"

sees—providing there be neither rain nor snow falling—eight or ten of these books, with their straggling India-ink hieroglyphics, spread out to dry over every available spot in the smiling but stunted enclosure of bloom and sunshine.

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ous crop of upbristling locks, wore his laurels with equity.

The kindly little school-master's duties in Japan—I think I may here remark in appropriate connection—are somewhat promiscuous, if not, indeed, encroaching. It will have been seen from a description of the *Genji-Heike* game, given in another chapter, that, when occasion demands, the tutor cheerfully presides over childish sports, but with the most urbane unconsciousness imaginable he wanders even further yet. He invades the lawns of a nursery-maid's heretofore virgin precincts, and washes Tom Thumb faces, seeing that dozens of small brown hands are kept clean, adjusting here an *obi*, and there the refractory chest folds of a pertinacious *kimono*, capturing and imprisoning truant locks of jet-black hair, and often, after school hours, taking his small charges for long delightful walks. These delectable parades are invariably interspersed with brief rests and cups of invigorating tea at the pretty tea-houses which in Japan dot equidistantly the charming country roads, the refreshing

beverage flowing down the crimson thirsty midget channels to the accompaniment of some highly pleasing hobgoblin tale.

Once at Nikko, just at sunrise, I saw from the *shoji* of my tea-house—as the delightfully airy and immaculately clean Japanese hotel is called—a band of happy youngsters under the protective wing of their diminutive schoolmaster. They were returning from an adjacent field, famed for a crowded pond of dazzling lotuses. Thither they had repaired in the darkness of early morning in order to be in time to witness the awakening of this royally lovely flower, whose sleepy white lids unclose with a softly muffled sound, not unlike that peculiar to the sudden parting of tightly closed lips. Though almost inaudible when hearkened to singly, the united unclosing of many of them produces a report that can be distinctly heard, and furnishes a source from which flow rivers of rhyme, every rhymester in the Land of the Rising Sun contributing his or her liquid spray. To some of these enthusiasts the pleasure is exhaustless of comparing the opening of the lotus to

a milk-white alabaster altar of oracle that never fails to turn the first rosy sunlight into sound, like the famous Memnon statue; to a musical throat that is always in time and in tune; to a faithful throat that never fails to open in loyal praise of the new-born day. But the Wee One best loves to liken the fragrant, noisy mouths to floral cannon igniting and "going off" at the first command of their puissant captain, who sails the eternal blue in his crimson splendor. Later on I learned that the jaunts of this particular school to the pond before daybreak were semi-weekly affairs throughout the lotus season, and that no one made these toilsome early August journeys with more apparent pleasure than did the kind little tutor himself.

The art of serving tea at that most ceremonious of all social usages, the Tea Ceremony, is, among the upper classes throughout the country, considered to be an indispensable frill on the educational garment of a young girl. This stilted affair simply bristles with exacting codes. There are despotic rules as to tea-bowls, which, upon this occasion

only, must be used instead of teapots; rules as to the tea itself, which must be powdered, and of one certain excellent quality; rules as to bamboo whisks, which are brought forward at a fixed moment, and with which the fragrant beverage is beaten until it foams; rules as to the peculiar variety and amount of the charcoal over which the water for the making of the tea is boiled; rules as to the utensils used, which must not only be antique, but rigidly chaste and plain in style; and rules as to the ceremonious, solemn performance of serving the tea after its elaborately formal making—all of which regulations are taught by professed instructresses, most of whom are gentlewomen in destitute circumstances.

The more deeply one's reconnoitring spirit insinuates itself into the merry lives lived behind the mysterious *shoji*—the lives so refined and prettily poetical, yet withal so difficult of comprehension; lives which may never be comprehended at all without stubborn resolve, study, the expenditure of much time, and complete attention—the more one

"A FLOCK OF GAYLY ATTIRED LITTLE MAIDENS GOING OUT TO TABLEAU"

is impressed with the conviction of the high standing of the Japanese Wee Ones, to put the fact in a fresh light. If pleasures that require large outlays of *yens* and *sens* be outside the pale of her potentialities, still no mother thinks her whole life's every thought and action too much to bestow upon her dimpled darlings. Every year — to cite an important instance—there comes the *Hina Matsuri*, or the Little Feast of Dolls, on the third day of the third month. The whole of this day Japanese mothers devote to their girls, to the exclusion of all other concerns. And from dawn until darkness reigns one sees scarcely anything else than an unrivalled invasion of dolls, and *o hina samas*—miniature models of almost everything known to the Japanese vision. Upon this jubilant occasion the *kwan-ko-bas* are draped and festooned with strings of great big dolls, middle-sized dolls, and little wee-wee dolls. And the wide-open fronts of these gay emporia are veritably packed from morning until night with an excited, chattering, pushing, and elbowing mob of whimsical mites, all striving to hand

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At first I was not a little puzzled to know why, with the great variety of beautiful fishes known to the Japanese, the carp alone was represented in this buoyant fashion; but upon sounding my fountain of information, Dr. Griffis, in *The Mikado's Empire*, I learned the reasons. It is considered that the carp's ability to leap and spring lightly over water-falls, and to swim successfully against the swiftest and strongest currents, emblematizes the way in which, as Japanese parents desire, their sons, when grown, shall surmount all difficulties, shall press energetically against life's tides of temptations, and shall push forward, forever forward, through all opposing difficult streams, until perfect and peaceful waters are gained.

Treading upon the heels of the joyful anniversary just described, there comes to my fortunate little boy another idolized outing.

This all too infrequent jubilation, extending, as does the Feast of Flags, through an entire day, occurs on the seventh day of the seventh month, and is called the Festival of Tanabata. At some hour during this day of revelry—a day, by-the-way, that never fails to call out shouting and tomtom-beating processions of small boys, each boy shouldering a young bamboo-tree girded with sashes of rainbow cloth and flecked with bits of gaudy paper—every boy with a sufficient number of years trailing astern of him is allowed to indulge in a swim. It is often affirmed that in Japan fewer boys meet death from drowning than in any other country of its size and population. For this happy margin thanks are undoubtedly due to his Highness the Sea-Monkey, for whom a wholesome fear is nurtured in the breasts of their easily awe-inspired progeny by Japanese parents. This weird miscreant is supposed to be able to stretch out his whole body—in a concentrated octopus fashion—into one illimitably long arm, *thereby the better to draw under the current any boy swimming without permission!* But

all during the jolly Festival of Tanabata the dreadful Sea-Monkey is bound, is handcuffed, and—if reports be true that have reached me through the rosy, fragrant channels of several pairs of whispering lips—the unfortunate fellow is also garroted! Hence, for a few delightful hours in a long, long year, under the watchful care of parents and elder brothers and sisters, the happy urchin may dive, may swim, and may float to his glad little heart's content.

The popular fable of Tanabata that calls forth this swimming festival is found to be of Chinese origin, and to recount the unsatisfactory loves of two stars—Altair, a herdsman, and Vega, a spinning-girl. Of these unfortunate heavenly bodies it is told that, though loving each other to the verge of madness, they are, alas, on opposite banks of the Celestial River (the Chinese and Japanese term for the Milky Way), in which the Supreme Deity bathes on all nights save the seventh night of the seventh moon, whence they may not meet oftener than upon this one happy occasion.

V

As if in recompense for the pathetic default that has left my Japanese Wee One ungreeted by the blissful approach of Christmas, of Santa Claus, and of all their combined sugar-plum festivities, he is given at the beginning of every year three gala days in which to make merry and to receive new kites, new flags, new dolls, new *hina samas*, new *kimonoes*, new *tabis*, new *zoris*, and, indeed, everything new that can be afforded. As I have indicated, a Japanese year fairly teems with holidays—the flimsiest, most shadowy excuse being seized upon for putting aside work and going a-larking. The select feast-days are celebrated as they severally recur, either exclusively by males or solely by females in Japan. But, by consequence, these three days, devoted to welcoming in the New Year, and that belong exclusively to none, but comprehensively to

all—old, young, males, females, rich and poor—are unequalled for aggregate joy. And, as I have intimated, this Festival of the New Year sets old and young alike delectably a-tremble. But, having at present to do only with the young, I must, though seriously to the brilliant occasion's detriment, labor to pin my expressions tightly and exclusively to *their* innocent jubilations.

During these three days of unrestrained tumultuous happiness, and, indeed, long before the festal hours have responded to the united supplications that pray them hasten, this archipelago of little convivialists is all agog, all a-jostle, and all astir. Anticipation writes her well-known signs—arched brows, wide eyes, distended nostrils, and relaxed jaws—upon the countenances of all the moon-visaged youngsters one meets in town or country. Exuberancy stirs the flock of expectant lilliputians into all sorts of ridiculous parodies on hops, skips, and jumps. And joy, innocent, harmless joy, renders each Wee One so deliciously, so amusingly tender of the other, that the gossamer wing of a love-feast seems to

have spread its roseate pinions over them all.

A tolerably fair substitute for Santa Claus is the *mochi*-man: a person of vast importance at the opening of a New Year, who mysteriously arrives, no Wee One knows from whence, at some hour of the day or night before the 1st of January, bringing with him an infectiously cheery confusion of earthen cooking-stoves and earthen vessels to boil the darling *mochi* in.

The much-esteemed *mochi*—which is mixed, boiled, stirred, cooled, and stuffed directly before the excited eyes and under the agitated nostrils of the disquieted Wee One—is, when ready to be eaten, a sweet, glutinous rice cake. In the beginning of its somewhat complicated preparation it is worked about in a wooden bowl with a bamboo-stick until it is as sleek and glossy as strained honey. The very sound, though to us singularly tame and unmusical, of this primitive pestle, striking its woody thud against the side of the equally primitive mortar, is sweeter to the ears of the Japanese Wee One than all the *arioso*

chimes that a London Christmas or a New York New-Year's morning could produce for him.

As a Japanese dwelling-house is chimneyless, the *mochi*-man is obliged to take a *mezzo termine*, and enter through the *shoji;* which he does so openly and so vauntingly as to do away with all that fascinating unreality that in its investiture of our king of the holiday revels is so precious to the little one. The Japanese small one is bereft of the exciting hope of hearing a clatter of noisy hoofs upon the roof; but an ancient custom—still in vogue in the un-Europeanized household—of dashing a heaping handful of rice and beans into the face of the supposed-to-be sleeping Wee One just as the Old Year dies and the New is born becomes quite as effective a galvanizer for sleepiness. Little bias eyes that are usually folded down with the twilight gain a magnificent victory over the "Goddess of Drowsyland," and the fortifications of "Wide-Awakeville" are invariably gallantly defended until after this signal for a midnight frolic. The throwing of rice and beans at

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parents invariably take their children with them, and *jinrikisha* after *jinrikisha*, filled with the bright little human butterflies, dash along the crowded thoroughfares from morning until night, adding more to the festive scene than any one who has not been an eye-witness of its party-colored pageantry would believe. The little girls, who upon all occasions are more showily dressed than the little boys, are particularly vigorous in lending brilliant tones to the festal picture. With truth, Miss Alice Mable Bacon, in touching upon this New-Year's display, says, in her charming explanation of the virtues, the frailties, the privileges, and the wrongs of Japanese girls and women:* "From early morning until bedtime the children wear their prettiest clothes, in which they play without rebuke." If a child comes to grief and soils or tears some of the pretty things, he or she is neither scolded nor struck nor relegated to some dark attic, but is gently cautioned by the elders to be more careful; but even so mild a remon-

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strance upon so careless an occasion is good-naturedly resented by the lookers-on, who laughingly declare the *contretemps* not only unavoidable, but a subject for congratulation. "For," say the culprit's jovial and oft-times unknown champions, "is not every day full of accident? And if accidents will happen to the little *kimono*, is it not best that the small gown should lose its beauty in so noble a cause?"

Far into the three happy nights that, come twilight-time, garlands of laughter, dimples, music, and songs are blended behind the lantern-lit *shoji* with the first three happy days of a new-born year, any game suggested by the Wee One is arranged and played. What happy, homely, quaint pictures would reproductions of these joyful evenings make if dexterously spread upon canvas by a skilful hand! Underfoot, the polished, shimmering matting; overhead, the string of gaudy lanterns spilling their mellow light upon the heads of old and young, each head wearing its own particular crown of perfect joy! Here a dodging bit of crim-

son, there a flitting yellow, now a sober gray, now a pensive green, and again the humble flutter of an inexpensive brown, for servants, too, invited to join, enter modestly, though with a joyous zest, into the family merrymaking.

That "those who dance must pay the fiddler" is usually very forcibly proven beyond any possibility of doubt the day after the New-Year's bird of pleasure has spread his wings and flown.

Just as the dentist is the *bête noir* of our little one, so is the ordeal of the *yaito* the particular bugbear of the Japanese Wee One.

The *yaito* treatment is accomplished by placing up and down the spinal columns little diamond-shaped *moxas* — an abbreviation of "*moe-kusa*," the "burning herb"—which are lighted and allowed to burn their tortuous way through the delicate skin and into the tender flesh—be assured, amid shrieks, howls, tears and groans; but no eyes are more "teary round the lashes," by-the-way, than those of the fond parent who thus seizes and tortures her Wee One. But the discipli-

nary mother firmly believes that she has, in thus nobly pocketing her own desire to let the little one escape the dreaded treatment "for just this once," chosen between a few hours of smarting but harmless pain for her loved one and long weeks of suffering and, perhaps, in the end, death.

Knowing, as I do, of the *yaito* application for everything — from a slight cold and mild attacks of indigestion, to low, dangerous fevers — knowing this, I say, and, moreover, having witnessed the countless sips of *saké* taken and the numberless balls of *mochi* consumed during the three hilarious days set aside for welcoming in the present year, I should not, had I paused to consider, have been so causelessly alarmed a few days since. My alarm arose upon seeing the *shojis* on three sides of my gardener's little bungalow (situated in a corner of my yard) spring apart at exactly the same second, and upon beholding the said gardener's seven children fleeing from the three suddenly-produced apertures as if for their very lives, with seven sets of teeth a-chatter, seven pairs of

bias eyes more aslant, if possible, than ever, seven heads with locks on end, and seven pairs of small feet casting here a wooden *geta*, and there a straw *zori*, as they sped. Forgetful of the *saké* and *mochi*, and mindful only of fire, that frequent demon visitor to frail Japanese establishments, I proceeded in great haste to the spot. Through the first *shoji*, still ajar, I could see that the wrinkled, cheerful face of the children's *O Ba San*, or Honorable Grandmother—as she chatted with several of her near neighbors who had dropped in to smoke their tiny bamboo-pipes with her—was lit up with an amused smile, and that her dusky eyes were a-dance with merriment. In answer to my inquiry regarding the sudden septuple departure, the Honorable Grandmother explained that some one in the course of conversation had inadvertently mentioned the words *yaito* and *moxa*, and that the flight, uninterrupted by a single questioning glance, had at once taken place. Not one of the unhappy seven returned again that day, and the seven were only driven home in the

evening—and they returned then with an ear-pricked-up and a reconnoitring aspect—by the long dark fingers of the advancing night.

As impossible as it is in this jocund paradise of jocular Wee Ones to turn a sudden corner, or, for the matter of that, so much as to glance from the *shoji* of one's own house without optically meeting some ludicrous convocation of its little ones, they, nevertheless, do not cloy the sense, nor pall upon us. They remain, unfailing, in their unconscious but exhaustless power to interest the heart and amuse the eye. The days, weeks, and months that I have spent—irresistibly drawn to observing and studying them—in the midst of their vivid medley, have not served to lessen the absorbing pleasure I at first experienced upon being introduced to the Wee Ones of Japan. Only this morning, indeed, I found myself trailing down the *Honchi Dori*, Yokohama, in the resistless wake of two comical elfins, one of whom was, seemingly, absorbed in the discussion of some intrigue of boundless im-

port. So filled, apparently, with reverence was he for his little companion, that I at once bethought me of a difference of birth; the slender lines of caste distinction being so finely drawn in Japan that one frequently sees much

"'I BELIEVE I'LL BE AN AMERICAN'"

younger children than were these exhibiting a really pitiful deference for their little playfellows of superior birth. But very little eavesdropping served to convince me of the error of my impression. A word caught here, two there, and three anotherwhere, proved to me that, though the distinction that held the little head so high was really the dignity of possession, the impor-

tant thing possessed was not a peerless line of ancestors, but a much-coveted piece of American chewing-gum which, I learned, had been introduced into the uninitiated neighborhood by a little Philadelphia girl, and alternately masticated by every Japanese youngster in its vicinity; each awaiting a turn with the respectful subserviency it had been my good-fortune to witness.

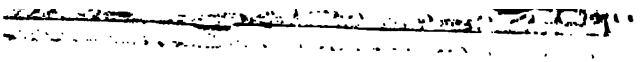
I venture to assert that we have all, at some time in our lives, been amused by the solemn vaticinations of little children as to their own unexplored futures, and have been touched to smiles or tears by the innocent emphasis with which they do away with that question of such anxious moment to the parent heart — the never-silent interrogation as to what they will be when they are "grown up." I have heard it affirmed by some very wise tongues, wise with the wisdom of age, that the smiles—or the tears, according to the situation's demands — respond much more readily upon witnessing how dangerously near a child sometimes is to that very thing he or she vowed never to

be; and how, sometimes amusingly and often pitifully, far away is he or she from the exaggerated climax of puerile aspirations. But I am sure that ambition's rudderless little craft never went to sea with smaller chance of reaching its goal than in an instance that came under my eye quite recently. I fear it will be found so when, at the end of years, little Massa Ito (the son of a wandering curio vender who pays me semi-occasional visits) measures the number of leagues he is adrift from the isle of his youthful hopes. I questioned the little fellow regarding his aspirations the morning that he sat on his small heels on a faded old rug surrounded by his father's broken-nosed gods, dusky *netsukis*, tattered *fuksas*, and rusty *tsubas*. He thereupon cast his eyes askance at the well-filled purse in the hands of a certain American who chanced to be present. The American was busily engaged in the exchange of about a third of the said purse's contents for one of the afore-mentioned suspiciously dusky *netsukis*. And Massa Ito replied to me, "I believe I'll be an American."

As I close this little tribute of affection to the most eccentric, and at the same time the most universally lovable, Wee Ones on earth, I desire to say that it would be an arduous task to convince the Japanese child of average intelligence that there is any poverty, any want, or any real necessity for labor in America. That land of "milk and honey" he pictures in his imaginative little brain as a paradise of kites and an oasis of holiday larks, surrounded on all sides by a great golden-sanded Pactolus gratifying all desires.

Need I plead my assertion made in a former chapter, to the effect that the Wee Ones of Japan are bound to insinuate themselves into our affections by some rosy undreamed-of route? For it must be seen by you, O American reader! that if you find it impossible to love my Wee One for his own, sweet, fascinatingly aberrant, blithesome self's sake, you must, at least, for his *couleur-de-rose* conception of your country and home, accord him some sort of a place in your heart.

THE END



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